

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 07818 050056Z

70

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 SCI-06 NIC-01 CU-04 RSR-01 /133 W

----- 010299

R 040326Z AUG 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7805

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 7818

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, US

SUBJ: MAO'S TALKS WITH US SCIENTISTS--EXTERNAL ASPECTS

REF: HONG KONG 7778

SUMMARY: MAO'S SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH US PHYSICIST YANG CHEN-NING AND AMERICAN PROFESSOR LI CHEN-PIEN WILL PROBABLY BE INTERPRETED BY MANY CHINESE AS A FURTHER ENDORSEMENT OF SINO-US DETENTE AND OF THE DESIRABILITY OF LEARNING GOOD THINGS FROM ABROAD. IT ALSO REFLECTS THE PRC'S ATTENTION TO THE ROLE THAT CHINESE-AMERICANS CAN PLAY IN FURTHERING THE DETENTE. END SUMMARY.

1. MAO'S SEPARATE RECEPTION OF TWO CHINESE-AMERICAN SCIENTISTS WITHIN A PERIOD OF TWO WEEKS IDENTIFIES THE CHAIRMAN NOT ONLY WITH THE ADVOCACY OF A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO SCIENCE (REFTEL) BUT ALSO WITH THE POLICY OF SINO-US DETENTE. FURTHERMORE IT REFLECTS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HONG K 07818 050056Z

PRC ATTENTION TO THE ROLE THAT CHINESE-AMERICANS CAN PLAY IN

FURTHERING THE DETENTE.

2. SINCE 1971 PEKING HAS FOLLOWED A LIBERAL POLICY OF ISSUING VISAS TO CHINESE-AMERICANS. THIS PATTERN WILL APPARENTLY CONTINUE AS WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRCLO IN WASHINGTON HAS INDICATED IT WILL HAVE A SPECIAL SECTION TO DEAL WITH THE CHINESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITY. PEKING APPARENTLY VIEWS CHINESE-AMERICANS AS AN IMPORTANT BRIDGE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. SOME AMERICANS OF CHINESE DESCENT WHO HAVE VISITED THE PRC REPORT A WELL-ORGANIZED EFFORT BY CHINESE OFFICIALS TO LEARN FROM THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN THE US. NO DOUBT THE PRC ALSO EXPECTS THAT THESE VISITORS, LIKE MOST OTHER AMERICANS, WILL RETURN WITH A GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC VIEW OF PEOPLE'S CHINA.

3. IN ADDITION, PEKING APPARENTLY VIEWS SOME CHINESE-AMERICANS-- PARTICULARLY ACADEMICS--AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON TAIWAN. THE CHINESE PROBABLY ALSO EXPECT THAT FRIENDLY VISITS TO CHINA OF WELL-KNOWN CHINESE AMERICANS, AND ESPECIALLY PUBLICIZED MEETINGS WITH MAO, WILL HAVE A FAVORABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON TAIWAN. IT WAS PROBABLY NOT ACCIDENTAL THAT THE TWO SCIENTISTS RECEIVED BY MAO WERE BOTH BORN ON THE MAINLAND AND BOTH PRESUMABLY HAVE CONNECTIONS OR RELATIONS ON TAIWAN.

4. IN A FEW CASES, POSSIBLY INCLUDING YANG CHEN-NING, THE PRC MAY HOPE TO PERSUADE CHINESE-AMERICANS WITH SPECIAL SKILLS TO RETURN TO CHINA TO TEACH OR DO RESEARCH (HONG KONG 7569). ON THE OTHER HAND, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH CHINESE-AMERICANS, CHOU HAS PERSONALLY DISCOURAGED THIS IDEA AND INSTEAD HAS URGED THEM TO CONTINUE TO LIVE IN THE US AND WORK FOR SINO-US FRIENDSHIP. CONSISTENT WITH THE PRC'S OVERALL POLICY ON THE STATUS OF OVERSEAS CHINESE, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT PEKING HAS TRIED TO SUBORN THE POLITICAL LOYALTY OF ETHNIC CHINESE AMERICANS. SUCH VISITORS ARE SCRUPULOUSLY IDENTIFIED IN PEKING MEDIA AS CHINESE-AMERICANS (OR LITERALLY, "CHINESE OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP"). HOWEVER, CHINESE-AMERICAN VISITORS AS A GROUP ARE CONSIDERED IN A SPECIAL CATEGORY, USUALLY SEPARATED IN HOTELS FROM WESTERNERS AND EVEN FROM OTHER AMERICANS. NCNA ALSO OCCASIONALLY DESCRIBES THE RECEPTION OF PRC DELEGATIONS IN THE USA BY "PATRIOTIC

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HONG K 07818 050056Z

OVERSEAS CHINESE"--A PHRASE WHICH IT IS CAREFUL NOT TO EMPLOY IN REPORTING SIMILAR EVENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WHERE THE QUESTION OF THE LOYALTY OF LOCAL CHINESE IS MORE SENSITIVE.

5. FINALLY, MAO'S PROMINENT ASSOCIATION WITH THE US SCIENTISTS MAY IN PART BE INTENDED AS A DRAMATIZATION OF HIS DICTUM THAT CHINA SHOULD LEARN WHAT IS GOOD FROM ABROAD. PRC SPOKESMEN IN UN ECONOMIC AGENCIES AND ELSEWHERE HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY EXPLICIT

IN ACKNOWLEDGING THAT FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY AND FOREIGN AID COULD BE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT "SO LONG AS WE RELY PRIMARILY ON OUR EFFORT." THE FACT THAT BOTH YANG AND LI ARE ETHNIC-CHINESE MAY MAKE THE CONCEPT OF LEARNING FROM FOREIGNERS MORE APPEALING.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973HONGK07818
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS OSBORN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730857/aaaabpxy.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 HONG KONG 7778
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <23-Jul-2001 by reddocgw, PRIVACY>; RELEASED <04-Dec-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <05-Dec-2001 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAO'S TALKS WITH US SCIENTISTS--EXTERNAL ASPECTS
TAGS: PFOR, CH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005